



February 2020

# Island County Parent to Parent Newsletter

INFORMATION, RESOURCES & SUPPORT FOR SPECIAL  
NEEDS FAMILIES IN ISLAND COUNTY

Island County Parent to Parent, DDA & Oak Harbor Public Schools invite you to [FREE](#)



## Right Response™ Training

- Do you want help identifying triggers that cause sensory overload/meltdowns?
- Does your child have behaviors that you want to learn skills on how to de-escalate?
- What do you do after the behaviors? Learn about Postvention.

**Date: Friday, March 13, 2020      Time: 9am-2:30pm**

**Part 2 is offered Wednesday, March 18th 9am-2:30pm**

**Location: Oak Harbor Public Schools Admin Bldg 350 South Oak Harbor Street**

**Limited Spots. RSVP TODAY! You Must RSVP to attend**

Priority given to parents/guardians of individuals with disabilities.  
For adults only, no childcare provided. NOTE: Bring your own lunch

**You must take Part 1 Training before you can take Part 2 offered March 18th**

**This training is used by all Island County School District employees. Learn what those working with your child use as prevention and management techniques.**

RIGHT RESPONSE™ training is designed for anyone who might encounter an individual with a behavioral escalation. The focus of this workshop centers on preparation and management of oneself for success when needing to de-escalate an individual or avoid their potential dangerous behavior.

Attendees in this workshop will learn the cycle of risk management and response. This process includes a large focus on Prevention Strategies as well as de-escalation Techniques.

Postvention Learning is also a necessary task of risk management and response. Self-protection or physical intervention skills are not taught in this workshop. Those [skills are taught in Part 2 on March 18th](#).

To RSVP Call/Text: Tiffany (360)632-7539 Email: [t.wheeler-thompson@islandcountywa.gov](mailto:t.wheeler-thompson@islandcountywa.gov)

All Ages  
All Abilities

# Spring Fling Dance Party



**Dancing, Arts & Crafts, Potluck and  
Free Family Fun!**

**Saturday, April 4th Noon-2pm**

**Coupeville Rec Hall**

**901 NW Alexander St, Coupeville**

Just a nice time to get together to meet some new families in our community, reconnect with others you've met at events, set up play dates, let your kids be themselves. Great networking opportunity.



For more information, contact Parent to Parent:  
Tiffany Wheeler-Thompson (360)632-7539 Call/Text

Parent to Parent offers support and resources for special needs families in our community

## 9 Surprising Physical Symptoms of Childhood Anxiety

### signs of anxiety in children



Sometimes our bodies realize our mental health struggles before our brains do. Though we tend to think of mental illness as, well... *mental*, the reality is mental illnesses can affect our bodies physically. This can be especially true for kids struggling with anxiety.

Children with anxiety [may experience](#) some physical symptoms we typically associate with physical illnesses — like stomachaches and headaches, for example. It's important to be aware of these physical signs of childhood anxiety because more and more children are affected by anxiety every day. [According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#), in the U.S. alone, over 4.4 million children between ages 3 and 17 have diagnosed anxiety.

### 1. Stomachaches and/or Vomiting

One of the most common symptoms of childhood anxiety is abdominal pain, or stomachaches, which can sometimes lead to vomiting. This is because the brain and gut are highly connected.

### 2. Headaches

Like adults, children can experience headaches as a result of anxiety or heightened stress. According to the [Anxiety and Depression Association of America \(ADAA\)](#), migraines and chronic daily headaches are also common in people who live with anxiety disorders.

### 3. Dizziness or Fainting

Dizziness in children is often linked to dehydration, but can also be due to anxiety. [According to the Boston Children's Hospital](#), a child who feels faint or dizzy might use terms like, “woozy,” “foggy” or “cloudy” to describe what they are experiencing.

### 4. Heart Palpitations or Chest Pain

In adults, chest pain is often linked to cardiac problems, but in children, less than 2% of patients receive a cardiac diagnosis for their chest pain, [according to a 2012 study](#). In the study, researchers found children with noncardiac chest pain reported higher levels of anxiety sensitivity.

### 5. Hives

Ever notice when you get stressed, your skin starts to break out? Stress and anxiety can trigger acne breakouts or can even cause you to get [hives on your skin](#). For children or adults who already have skin conditions like psoriasis, an autoimmune skin disease that causes red, scaly patches to appear on the skin, stress can [trigger a flare-up](#).

### 6. Loss of Appetite

Stress and anxiety sometimes suppress our appetites to help us [deal with pressure](#). This can be true in cases of childhood anxiety. In many cases, once the stress resides, a child's appetite will return.

### 7. Skin Picking or Other Body-Focused Repetitive Behaviors

According to the [TLC Foundation for Body-Focused Repetitive Behaviors](#), body-focused repetitive behaviors (BFRBs) like scratching, compulsive skin picking or hair pulling are seldom self-harm. In most cases, people engage in BFRBs as a way to self-soothe or alleviate anxiety.

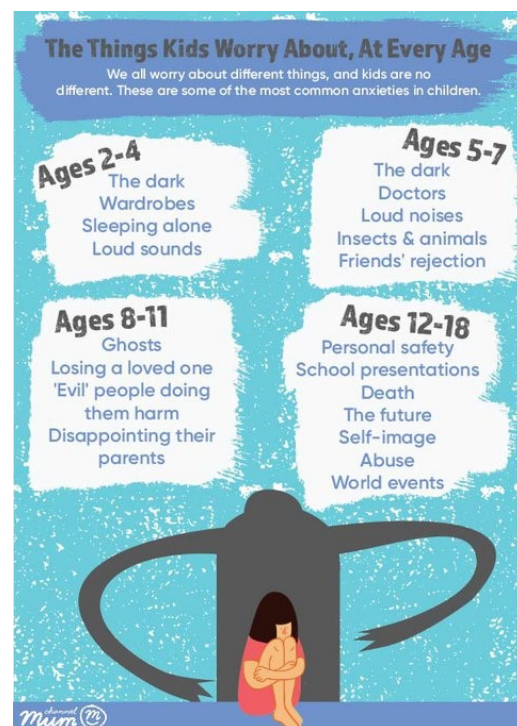
### 8. Shortness of Breath

Children who have difficulty breathing sometimes have health issues like asthma, lung disease or pneumonia, but in some cases, shortness of breath can be [related to anxiety](#). Anxiety-reducing strategies like exercise and deep breathing may help a child with this symptom.

### 9. Gas and Diarrhea

Indigestion, gas and diarrhea [can be common](#) physical symptoms of anxiety in adults and children. Whether related to anxiety or a different physical condition, if you or a child in your life is experiencing gastrointestinal issues, it's important to seek treatment.

\*Juliette Virzi,  
Mental Health  
Editor  
The Mighty







Ready, Set, KNOW...



# Earned Income Tax Credit

*If you are a taxpayer with a disability, or have a child with a disability, you may qualify for a refund that puts extra dollars in your pocket.*

Life's a little easier with **eitc**  
earned income tax credit

The IRS estimates that as many as 1.5 million people with disabilities miss out on a valuable credit for low to moderate income workers because they fail to file a tax return.

Many of these non-filers fall below the income threshold requiring them to file; however, in order to claim the EITC, you have to file a tax return—even if you don't owe taxes for the previous year.

Those who qualify could pay less federal tax, pay no tax at all or even get a tax refund that puts an extra \$2 to \$6,557 into their pocket.

## Eligibility for EITC

To qualify for EITC, you must have earned income from employment, self-employment or another source that does not exceed income limits (see chart on the right) as well as meet a few additional criteria explained at [www.irs.gov/eitc](http://www.irs.gov/eitc). Social Security benefits or Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) do not count as earned income.

## Disability and EITC

Taxpayers may claim a child\* of any age as a qualifying child if the person has a permanent disability and you both meet all other EITC requirements. The tax law definition of totally and permanently disabled is:

- ✧ The person cannot engage in any substantial gainful activity because of a physical or mental condition.
- ✧ A doctor determines the condition has lasted or the doctor expects it to last continuously for at
- ✧ least a year or lead to death.

\*child: son, daughter, adopted child, stepchild, foster child or a descendant of any of them such as a grandchild; brother, sister, half brother, half sister, step brother, step sister or a descendant of any of them such as a niece or nephew.

## EITC and Public Benefit Programs

The law is clear that tax refunds, including refunds from tax credits such as the EITC, are not counted as income for purposes of determining eligibility for benefits (such as Social Security disability benefits, Medicaid, and food assistance programs). This applies to any federal program and any state or local program financed with federal funds.

Use the EITC Assistant at [irs.gov/eitc](http://irs.gov/eitc) to determine eligibility and estimate the amount of your credit.



## WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU HAD MORE MONEY?

### Income Limits for Tax Year 2019:

- ✧ \$50,162 (\$55,952 married, filing jointly) with three or more qualifying children
- ✧ \$46,703 (\$52,493 married, filing jointly) with two qualifying children
- ✧ \$41,094 (\$46,884 married, filing jointly) with one qualifying child
- ✧ \$15,570 (\$21,370 married, filing jointly) with no qualifying children

**Investment income** must be \$3,600 or less for the year.

### Maximum Credit Amounts:

- ✧ \$6,557 with three or more qualifying children
- ✧ \$5,828 with two qualifying children
- ✧ \$3,526 with one qualifying child
- ✧ \$529 with no qualifying children

**Remember: To claim EITC, you must file a tax return even if you owe no tax.**

Find out if you qualify for EITC.  
Ask your tax return preparer or visit:  
[irs.gov/eitc](http://irs.gov/eitc).





2 examples of Special Needs Trusts/Savings Plans available to those living in Washington State with Developmental Disabilities.



2638 State Ave NE • Olympia, WA 98506 • (360) 357-5596

Washington State DD Endowment Trust Fund RCW 43.330.431	Washington State ABLE Savings Plan ABLE Act - Federal Law PL 113-295
<b>Who is it for?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A person with a developmental disability, under age 65, who has been determined eligible for state DDA services</li> <li>The condition happened at the age 18 or before</li> <li>Lives in the state of Washington at the time of enrollment</li> </ul>	<b>Who is it for?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Washington resident eligible for SSI benefits or the Social Security Disability, Retirement, and Survivor's program or who submits certification that meets the criteria for a disability certification</li> <li>Condition happened before age 26</li> </ul>
<b>What is it?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Special Needs Trust</li> <li>Trust 1 Third Party Trust</li> <li>Trust 2 Self-Settled Trust</li> </ul>	<b>What is it?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A savings plan</li> <li>A form of 529 Account Tax Favored Qualified ABLE program in IRS code</li> </ul>
<b>Are there limits in contributions and spending?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No limits on contributions</li> <li>No limits on spending, except room and board for those on SSI</li> <li>Does not affect SSI or Medicaid eligibility</li> </ul>	<b>Are there limits in contributions and spending?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>\$15,000 a year</li> <li>\$500,000 overall limit</li> <li>Spending is approved for qualified disability related expenses</li> <li>First \$ 100,000 does not affect SSI eligibility</li> </ul>
<b>Are taxes involved?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Earnings from investments are taxed when spent, if the person has taxable income</li> <li>Qualified Disability Trust</li> </ul>	<b>Are taxes involved?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ABLE earnings and withdrawals <b>are</b> not taxed</li> <li>Distributions not used for qualified disability expenses must pay <b>federal taxes and a 10% tax penalty</b></li> </ul>
<b>What occurs if the beneficiary passes away?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trust 1 Third Party: no pay back required; Distributed according to Trust documents</li> <li>Trust 2 Self-Settled: Medicaid/Medical Assistance Recovery before distribution according to trust documents</li> </ul>	<b>What occurs if the beneficiary passes away?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assets transferred to beneficiary's estate and can pay off ABLE expenses</li> <li>Medicaid/Medical Assistance Recovery (regardless of contributor) before distribution of assets to remainder beneficiaries</li> </ul>
<b>What does it cost?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enrollment fee of \$600; minimum annual management fee \$75.00; and a \$75 tax prep fee. Fees are offset by a state match</li> </ul>	<b>What does it cost?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annual fee of \$35.00</li> <li>Annual investment fee of 0.30-0.38 % depending on the investment portfolio</li> </ul>
<b>When is it available?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals can enroll now</li> </ul>	<b>When is it available?</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Individuals can enroll now</li> </ul>

For questions regarding Washington ABLE, contact the call center at 844-600-2253 or use the chat function available at <https://www.washingtonstateable.com/>.



Revised November 16, 2018

For questions regarding the DD Endowment Trust Fund, call toll-free 1-(888)754-8798.



Island County Parent to Parent  
 Tiffany Wheeler-Thompson, Coordinator  
 PO Box 5000  
 Coupeville, WA 98239  
 (360)632-7539 (Voicemail or Text)  
 t.wheeler-thompson@islandcountywa.gov  
[Island County Special Needs Resource Guide](https://www.islandcountywa.gov/Humanservices/Pages/Parent-to-Parent.aspx)  
<https://www.islandcountywa.gov/Humanservices/Pages/Parent-to-Parent.aspx>

Update: In our January 2020 Newsletter we published information about Medicaid and [accessing mental/behavioral health](#) services/resource with your local Behavioral Health Organization (BHO). As of July 2019, accessing mental/behavioral health has changed. If you have Medicaid/Apple Health. You no longer are funded or referred by the BHO. You must go through your primary doctor, your insurance carrier (MCO -Managed Care Organization) or call the provider directly.

#### MCO/Apple Health

Amerigroup - (800)600-4441  
 Community Health Plan (800)440-1561  
 Molina (800)869-7165  
 Coordinated Care Group (877)644-4613

United HealthCare Community Plan (877) 542-8997

Providers in Island County that accept Medicaid/Apple Health include:  
 SeaMar (360)679-7676  
 Sunrise Behavior Health(360)544-3800(OH)  
 (360)929-8490 Camano  
 Compass Health: (360)682-4100

If you would like to talk to someone local, Call Jackie Henderson (360)678-7881. Island County Human Services Director.

<https://www.hca.wa.gov/.../pro.../behavioral-health-and-recovery>

## Want to be a part of the solution?

Join the Accessible Communities Committee.

We identify barriers that people with disabilities experience in our community. The committees address those needs with projects to obtain accessibility for everyone. Physical, mental health, at-risk, veterans, cognitive, etc. Our community needs to be accessible to all.

We are seeking self-advocates and family members, as well as providers to be a part of these committees. One committee on Whidbey Island and one on Camano Island. The commit-

tees are a sub-set of the Governor's Committee on Disability Issues and Employment. Collaboration is key.

Questions or want more details, contact Tiffany Wheeler-Thompson, facilitator for Island County. Check out the Governor's website for more details. [https://](https://accessiblecommunities.wa.gov/)

[accessiblecommunities.wa.gov/](https://accessiblecommunities.wa.gov/)

Projects approved for Island County & funded by the Governor's committee to date:

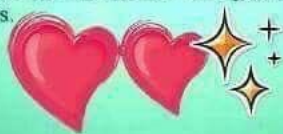
- Bus Stop Seats for those that can't stand long.
- Mental/Behavior Health Resource Guide for First Responders

### My Shoes.

I am wearing a pair of shoes. Each day I wear them. Each day I wish they'd feel more comfortable and some days, they do. Some days my shoes hurt so badly that I do not think I can take another step. I get funny looks wearing these shoes. I can tell in others eyes that they are glad these are my shoes and not theirs. They never talk about my shoes. To learn how painful my shoes can be sometimes might make them uncomfortable. To truly understand these shoes one must walk in them but once you put them on, you can never take them off.

I now realize that I am not the only one who wears these shoes. There are many pairs in this world. Some people ache daily as they try and walk in them. Some have learned how to walk in them so they don't hurt quite as much. Some have worn the shoes so long that days will go by before they think about how much they hurt. No parent set out to wear these shoes. Yet, because of these shoes I am a stronger person. These shoes have given me the strength to face anything. They have made me who I am.

I am a proud parent who has a child with special needs and I will forever walk in these shoes.



## Spring Sports are Just Around the Corner

### • Special Olympics (Ages 8 & Up)

Oak Harbor offers Cycling, Track, and Swimming beginning in March. For more info contact Chris (360)320-2549 or [wispecialolympics@gmail.com](mailto:wispecialolympics@gmail.com)

### • Challenger Division Baseball (Ages 4-18)

Registration now open until March 15th. T-Ball rules, great for beginners or those that need a little extra support on and off the field. My daughter has been on the team since it started. Call me(Tiffany) if you have questions or reach out to coach Jason [aidynsdad@yahoo.com](mailto:aidynsdad@yahoo.com) \$110. to find out more, check out North Whidbey Little League website [www.northwhidbeylittleleague.org/](http://www.northwhidbeylittleleague.org/)

**Summer Camps are now open for registration. Do not wait!** For a list (last updated in 2018 due to loss of funding), check out CSHCN Summer Camp Guide. It gives you a comprehensive list with details and contact info. [cshcn.org/resources-contacts/summer-camp-directory/](http://cshcn.org/resources-contacts/summer-camp-directory/)